THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • SATURDAY • FEBRUARY 05, 2022 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Vehicle fitness testing may be automated

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways plans to make the vehicle fitness test mandatory only through automated testing stations. It has issued a draft notification seeking public comments on the plan, which it proposes to roll out in a phased manner from April 1, 2023. Fitness testing for personal vehicle (non-transport) is done at the time of renewal of registration (after 15 years)

RIVER-LINKING

SIDDU SAYS PROJECTS WILL BENEFIT TN MORE

The Opposition Leader in the Assembly says the Centre taking such decisions without consulting states will result in more inter-state disputes over river water sharing | P4

EXPRESS READ

PG-NEET 2022 to be held on May 21

New Delhi: The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admissions to PG medical courses has been postponed to May 21 from March 12, a day after the Union Health Ministry approached the Apex Court seeking postponement by six to eight weeks. P4

Hijab row spreads to more colleges in Udupi

Udupi: The headscarf controversy spilled over to two more colleges — the Government PU College at Byndoor and Bhandarkar's College in Kundapur — in Udupi district on Friday with girls, wearing the hijab, denied entry. P4

MSP panel after polls, put off on EC's advice

Farmers have to wait at least a month

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

CLEARING the air on the delay in setting up the promised panel on the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Friday told the Rajya Sabha that it was deferred at the behest of the Election Commission.

While announcing the repeal of three farm laws in November last year, the Centre had promised to set up a committee to discuss the farmers' demand of a legal guarantee on MSP. Since elections to five states, including Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, are due, the government had written to the EC for guidance.

"The EC's reply has come. It has said that the committee should be formed after the elections conclude," the minister said in a written reply to a question by Sukhram Singh Yadav (SP). Since the counting of votes will happen on March 10, farmer unions will have to wait at least a month for the panel to be set up.

"The entire country knows that the prime minister has announced the formation of a committee to make crop diversification, natural farming and MSP effective and transparent. The government is committed to the announcement made by the PM," Tomar assured.

Tomar's remarks came a day after the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of over 40 farmer unions, accused the Centre of not fulfilling its promise of setting up the MSP panel soon. The Morcha had also urged UP voters to punish the BJP for reneging on its promises to farmers.

Guarantee proposal

The inter-ministerial panel set up in 2007 had rejected Swaminathan Committee's proposals on MSP guarantee, promotion of organic and zero budget farming, Choudhary said

Responding to a supplementary question from BJD leader Sasmit Patra on implementing the Swaminathan Committee's recommendations, Minister of State for Agriculture Kailash Choudhary said the panel had recommended MSP to be fixed 50% higher than the cost of production but this was not accepted by the inter-ministerial panel then.

"However, our government accepted that recommendation. And now procurement is being undertaken at MSP that is 50% higher than the cost of production," he said.

+vity rate falls to single digit in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

WITH 6,039 new Covid cases in Bengaluru on Friday, the day-wise test positivity rate fell to a single digit at 9.17 percent, stated Health and Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Friday. But as per the Covid war room data, the city, in fact, achieved the milestone at 9.38 per cent the previous day on February 3.

Sudhakar said this is the lowest since January 8. "Daily new cases have fallen by 80 per cent from the peak of 30,540 on January 20. Active cases at 51,000 and falling sharply," he tweeted.

Other districts with the single-digit positivity rate as of February 3 are Ramanagara, Dakshina Kannada, Chikkamagaluru, Gadag, Davanagere, Bidar, Uttara Kannada, Yadgir, Dharwad, Koppal, Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru Urban, Vijayapura, Udupi, Chitradurga and Kolar.

Meanwhile, 14,950 new cases were reported in the state on Friday, taking the tally to 38,75,724. With 40,599 discharges and 53 deaths during the day, active cases stand at 1,23,098. The day-wise positivity rate for the state was at 10.93 per cent. In the last 24 hours, the state witnessed a negative growth rate of Covid cases at -9.94 per cent. CONTINUED ON: P5

K'TAKA OPENS UP FURTHER

Gyms, yoga centres, cinema halls, multiplexes, auditoriums, ranga mandiras and swimming pools can operate at full capacity

Precutionary measures like wearing N95 masks at all times have to be followed. These should be strictly enforced by the staff

These spaces must allow people who are vaccinated with two doses.

Visitors will be thermal screened at the entrance and hand sanitizer will be used | P3

NATIONWIDE	FEB 3	FEB 4
Fresh cases	1,72,433	1,68,194
Recoveries	2,59,107	2,46,674
Deaths	1,008	1,072

KARNATAKA	FEB 3	FEB 4
Fresh cases	16,436	14,950
Recoveries	44,819	40,599
Deaths	60	53

KA-O-METER	
TAKE YOUR SHOT	February 3: 50,11,156 doses
	February 4: 42,95,142 doses
TOTAL DOSES	1,60,42,34,592

'CONSENSUAL ACT'

SIT gives clean chit to Jarkiholi in sex CD case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A day after the Karnataka High Court allowed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) to submit its final report before a magisterial court on the CD gate scandal involving former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, the investigating officer on Friday presented a B report before the court, giving a clean chit to the Belagavi political strongman.

The investigating officer told the court they could not find any evidence of sexual assault as it was a case of consensual sex. P5

ED arrests Channi's nephew

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chandigarh / New Delhi

THE Enforcement Directorate has arrested Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi's nephew Bhupinder Singh alias Honey in a money laundering case linked to alleged illegal sand mining. The action comes just two days ahead of the visit of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to Ludhiana, where he is expected to announce the party's CM face for Punjab. Channi is the frontrunner in the race.

Sources said Bhupinder was called for questioning at the Jalandhar ED office on Thursday. The ED sleuths decided to take him into custody after several hours of questioning as he was evasive in his replies. Officials said he was kept in a lockup in ED's Jalandhar office the whole night. He was produced in court on Friday and was remanded in ED custody till February 8. He will be allowed to meet his family for two hours daily.

Channi said he respects law but alleged the action against his relative was due to political vendetta by the Centre.

Reacting to the arrest, the Congress accused the Centre of turning the ED into Election Department. "Attacking Channi by digging up his nephew's six-year-old case, attacking Sidhu in a 33-year-old case are extensions of support to Kejriwal," said Congress media department chief RS Surjewala.

SALESMAN OFFERS WIFE TO OTHER MEN, HELD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

JUST days after a wife-swapping scandal rocked Kerala, the cyber crime police from the Northeast Division of Bengaluru have arrested a salesman of an electrical shop, who allegedly invited other men to have sex with his wife and videographed the act. He had created a social media account taking a woman's name and contacted interested men. Vinay M (28) was arrested after a police informer alerted the cyber crime police.

The accused, who hails from Mandya, got married to his colleague Mamatha (name changed) in 2019 after falling in love with her. The couple has a one-year-old son.

A senior police officer said that Vinay was addicted to porn and forced Mamatha too to watch it. Later, they started video recording their intimate moments, and uploading them on the internet. Recently, he convinced Mamatha to be intimate with other men and started putting out messages inviting those interested. CONTINUED ON: P5

Savlon
Swasth India
27 MINUTES OF INFECTION PROTECTION OR 25 HOURS?
DEPENDS ON THE MASK YOU DECIDE TO WEAR.
Just like the virus, masks have variants too. One of the most powerful mask variants is the scientifically designed N95 mask, or its comparable BIS certified FFP2 mask.
If we all wear these masks, we can stay protected from viruses (including the fast spreading variant) for up to 25 hours*, even in the presence of an infected person. With cloth masks, this duration drops to a mere 27 minutes*.
FFP2 masks have electrostatically charged layers that ordinary masks do not have. It's no wonder that it is recommended to use FFP2 or N95 masks.
TIME IT TAKES TO TRANSMIT AN INFECTIOUS DOSE OF COVID-19
PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING
PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING
NOTHING
CLOTH MASK
SURGICAL MASK
N95 MASK (10%)
NOTHING: 15 MIN | 20 MIN | 30 MIN | 2.5 HR
CLOTH MASK: 20 MIN | 27 MIN | 40 MIN | 3.3 HR
SURGICAL MASK: 30 MIN | 40 MIN | 60 MIN | 5 HR
N95 MASK (10%): 2.5 HR | 3.3 HR | 5 HR | 25 HR
*Provided both wear N95 or its comparable FFP2 masks correctly.
#See table. From ACGIH® Pandemic Task Force Fact Sheet: Workers Need Respirators.